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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, March 4, 1935.

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Subject: "NEWS OF SOME NEIGHBORS." Information from the Extension Service, U.S.D.A.

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This Monday perhaps you'd enjoy something different from our usual talk on economy food. How would you like to go wandering around the map a little with me, for a change? We'll just "take a look-see," as a Chinese friend of mine used to say -- take a look-see what some housekeepers in different parts of the country have been doing during the past year.

Did you ever notice that a glimpse into a neighbor's kitchen often gives you a helpful idea for your own, and that sometimes, hearing how other women or groups of women have worked out their problems, may give you an idea for your own club or community?

Well, here we go -- off first to Clackamas County, Oregon, to hear about the fine job of relief canning that the women there did last year. Under the supervision of the county home demonostration agent, they equipped and ran two canning centers. These two centers were open free to people on relief rolls and open to others at a very small charge. Women brought their vegetables and meat and fish to the center and canned these products themselves. Two hundred and twenty-eight people used these canning centers and put up more than 39,000 quarts of food, valued at more than $7,900. The extension agent in that county must have spent a busy summer for she not only supervised these two canning centers, but she also taught groups of women how to dry their fruits and vegetables at home.

Clubs of women in many states did record canning jobs last summer. For example, a little extension club of sixteen women in the town of San Luis, Colorado, put up 1019 glass jars and 1672 tin cans of food for home use. Twenty-two different foods went into these jars and cans. This club didn't have a canning center, but the members joined together and bought a 16-quart pressure cooker and an automatic tin-can sealer and used these cooperatively. They did their canning according to scientific methods, of course, and the venture was so successful that they're already raising funds to buy a large cooker for this summer's use.

Then, in another part of Colorado -- Routt County -- thrifty farm women went in for the preservation of wild game and wild fruits for wintertime meals. They canned mountain trout lured from the sparkling streams of the Colorado Rockies. And they put up sage chickens, for winter "wild chicken" dinners.

Many Native fruits that grow wild in that part of the country went into marmalade, jam, jelly, and canned sauce for farm pantry shelves. The women gathered and put up wild thimbleberries, gooseberries, chokeberries and service berries. At the achievement day in that county the women exhibited more than five hundred jars of these canned foods.

I've told you before about up-and-coming farm women who have been making money at home industries in recent years. Well, here are a few more true stories I learned recently.

A roadside market contributed fifty percent of the income of one Arkansas farm family last year. Mrs. Gideon Vernon of Washington County, Arkansas, sold nearly a thousand dollars' worth of farm products. Mrs. Vernon's market is near enough her farm so she can do this work in addition to running her house. She keeps her market open from February to December.

Come across the country now and up to the State of Vermont. Farm women in Vermont have been making money raising rabbits and converting the skins into rabbit-fur baby slippers and women's boudoir slippers. One woman owns a rabbit farm and hires workers from among her neighbors to help her manufacture slippers. She also raises turkeys, cans vegetables, and makes wild strawberry jam for sale.

Women on Cape Cod make money each year selling their handmade bayberry candles. And Florida housewives earn a little extra by making the most of nature's gifts. They find hand-picked sponges and beautiful shells and waxed orange blossoms profitable wares. I think perhaps I've told you before that many women in Missouri add to their income each year by weaving baskets of such native plants as honeysuckle, buckthorn and willow.

We'll be talking about planting your garden very soon now. Let me tell you about a group of enthusiastic new gardeners in Wilson County, Texas. Most of the tenants in this county are Mexicans. Just a few years ago their diet consisted of tortillas, frijoles and carne -- most of it bought with money advanced by the landlord on a monthly basis. Now, with the advice of the county agents, most of these people are growing their own fresh vegetables -- carrots, peas, beets, beans, potatoes, sweetpotatoes, and so on. Supplied with the produce of their own gardens, tenants have been able to get along with less than half the usual sum of advances. So they have much less of a debt to pay off in the fall. Many of these Mexican families, in addition to making gardens, now own a milk cow and a pig or two. The result? Well, you can see some good results when you look at the children. Their appearance shows how much this more varied diet has improved their health.

That's all the travelling we'll do today. More stories some other time.

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